

Appendix F:

Overflow Discharge Communications Plan

Wastewater discharge notification¹

Doc Ref: A766567



Wet weather discharge

Date: 12 June 2018

Trigger: If discharge going ahead Utilities to phone Pollution on-call number XXXXXXXXXX

FULL PROCESS				
	RESPONSIBLE	COMMUNICATE WHAT	HOW	TO
1	Utilities	Provides heads up if heavy rain warning is issued from Metservice / preparations to reduce risk of discharges / indicate time may have to discharge.	EMAIL	CE + Senior Managers Environmental Health Comms
2	Utilities	Decide on discharge going ahead, provide information required for email notification.	PHONE	Pollution On-call 027 XXXXXX
3	Pollution Response	Receive confirmation of scours opening time/location. Phone Comms (Karen Hadfield) and On-call EHO	PHONE	Comms (Karen - 027 XXX XXXX) <i>(leave text message if phone unanswered)</i> On-call EHO
4	Comms	Confirm messages and commence activity required for social media platforms Act as point of contact for enquiries	WEB FACEBOOK NAUMAI	Public
5	Regulatory Services / Pollution Response	Phone Medical Officer of Health Commence stakeholder notification process. Place signage at designated sites	PHONE EMAIL SIGNS	Medical Officer of Health CX EH Sewer Notification Distribution List Public

¹ For the purposes of the Wastewater Overflows Consent Application contact details have been removed.

6	Utilities	Provide water quality testing results and media information within 48 hours Update provided if situation changes	EMAIL	Senior Managers Regulatory Services email Comms
7	Comms	Distributes updates, media info, education messages	WEB FACEBOOK NAUMAI	Public Staff
8	Utilities	Notify end of discharge	PHONE	Pollution Hotline
9	Pollution Response	Communicate end of discharge to stakeholders. Remove signage after 5 days of closing of scours	EMAIL SIGNS	Comms EH Sewer Notification email list Public
10	Comms	Update information on social media platforms	WEB NAUMAI FACEBOOK	Public

RELATED LINKS / INFO

[EH Sewer Overflow email list](#) includes:

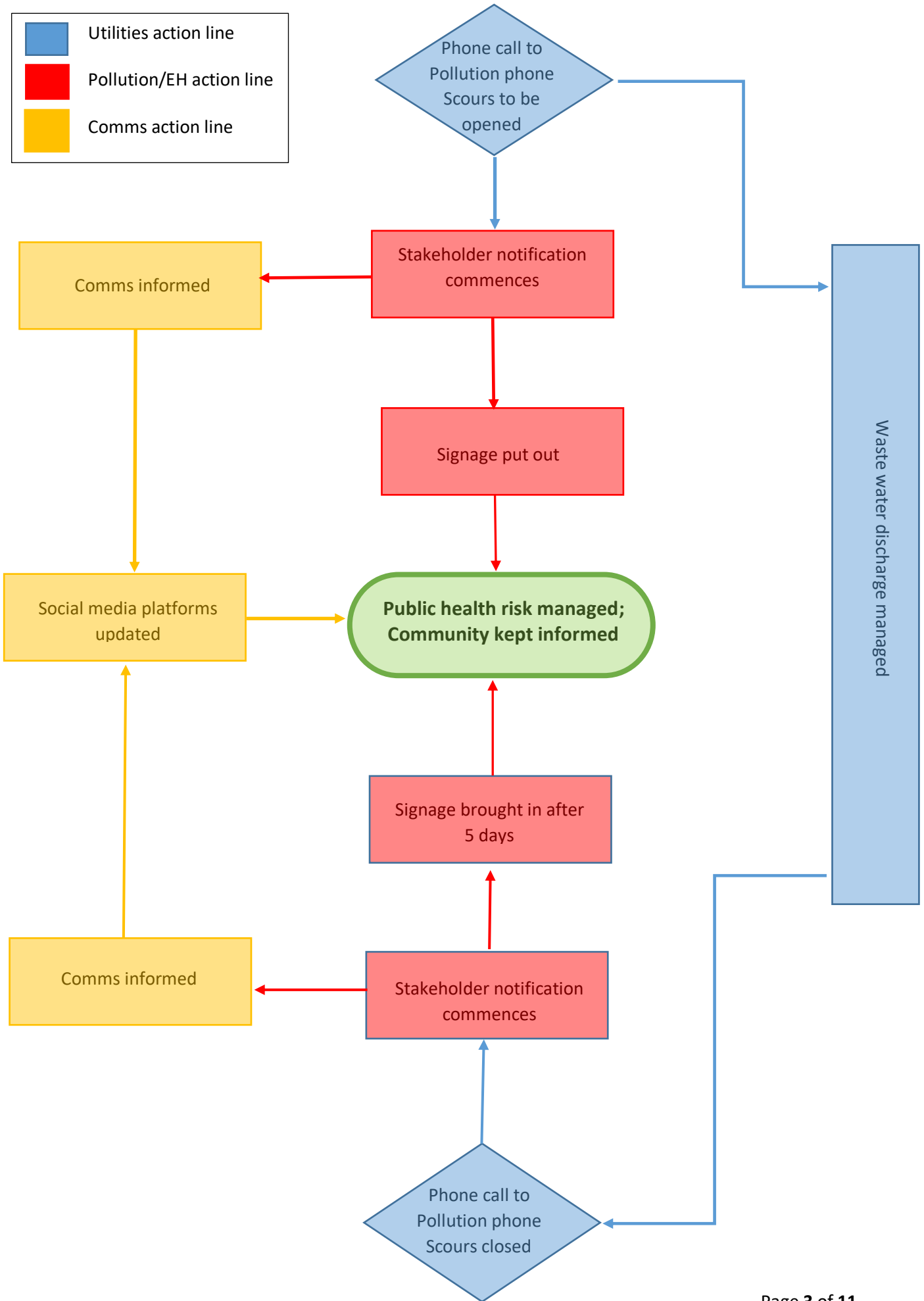
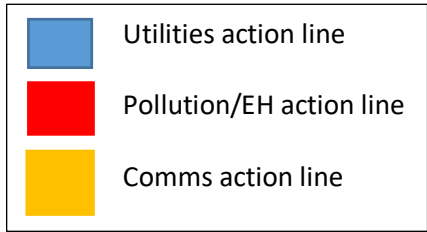
- Medical officer health, and on call Health protection officer
- External water groups: waka, rowing, surf, environment, health
- Iwi, Wastewater advisory Group
- Mayor and Councillors
- Senior management team
- Projects team, Utilities team, Regulatory services, Water & Coastal team, Environmental Monitoring & Hydrology team
- Comms, Customer Service
- Gisborne herald, Local radio

Media contacts:

- Gisborne Herald: Debbie.Gregory@gisborneherald.co.nz
- MoreFM: Bevan Chapman bchapman@mediaworks.co.nz
- NZME: Treva Rice TrevaRice@radionetwork.co.nz
- TurangaFM: Walter Walsh wiz@turangafm.maori.nz
Fred Maynard fred@turangafm.maori.nz

Council links:

- www.gdc.govt.nz
- www.facebook.com/GisborneDC



OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE			
Communicate the discharge notification to internal stakeholders ASAP and external stakeholders as early as practical and prior to peak use times.			
Water users are aware of any health risk in waterways - distribute messages through all channels available, monitoring data made available.			
Community is aware of causes and steps to solve the issue through ongoing education, shown through opinions monitored in media and social media.			
TEAM	CONTACT	PHONE	NOTES
Contractor	Joel.Robinson @fultonhogan.com	XXXXXXXX	Supply information and onsite communications
Utilities	Utilities Team Leader Neville West Chris Hopman	XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX	Supply information and communicate internally
Monitoring	Peter Hancock	XXXXXXXX	Conduct agreed monitoring processes
Regulatory Services	Pollution Hotline/On call EHO Kate Sykes Gary McKenzie	XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX	Distribute messages to internal and external stakeholders and put out signage
Comms	Karen Hadfield Anita Reedy Holthausen Jade Baty	XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX	Contact Karen in first instance or per order listed here to update social media platforms and monitor feedback externally
CE Senior Managers	Nedine Thatcher Swann Paul Murphy David Wilson Nick Zaman Keita Kohere	XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX	if further approval/ spokesperson needed

MESSAGES

EMAIL 1 Subject: Wastewater Notification: Valves opened



The city wastewater system has been flooded with large amounts of rain water draining from residential properties.

To prevent sewage from overflowing back into homes and onto roads, causing a significant health risk, Council has opened the emergency sewer valves at <<Insert scour sites>> into the <<Insert rivers and streams affected>> at approximately <<time>>.

The discharge is diluted, but contact with the waterways may be a risk to health.

We are notifying the Medical Officer of Health, water user and sports groups.

Temporary warning signs will be installed at swimming and recreation sites.

We advise no swimming, fishing or gathering shellfish in rivers and beaches until at least 5 days after the valves are closed, and warning signs are removed.

We will notify you when the discharge has stopped. Any updates will also be posted on our [website](#) and [Facebook](#) page.

Information on how rain water causes discharges is on our [website](#).

If you have any questions or concerns, please email comms@gdc.govt.nz or phone 0800 653 800. Please do not respond to this email.

EMAIL 2 Subject: Wastewater Notification: Valves closed



This is to confirm that the emergency sewer valves were closed at <<time>> and the discharge has stopped.

We advise no swimming, fishing or gathering shellfish in rivers and beaches until at least 5 days after the valves are closed, and warning signs are removed.

We don't make the call to discharge to rivers lightly, we do this to prevent sewage from overflowing back into people's homes and properties, and onto roads, causing a significant health risk.

A large amount of stormwater is getting into the wastewater system from private properties. Our DrainWise team are inspecting properties and working with homeowners to fix stormwater drainage to reduce the risk of discharges happening in the future.

Head to our website for more information on the [DrainWise project](#) or to get in touch with the team, email Drainwise@gdc.govt.nz

We're always trying to improve our communication when discharges occur, if you have any feedback, suggestions or questions please contact comms@gdc.govt.nz . Please do not respond to this email.

FAQs: for additional messaging

Why does Council discharge to rivers?

We don't make the call to discharge to rivers lightly, we do this to prevent sewage from overflowing back into people's homes and properties causing a significant health risk.

It all boils down to huge amounts of stormwater getting into our wastewater system.

Our system is built to take wastewater from our toilets, sinks, basins, showers and baths to the wastewater treatment plant.

It's not designed to handle large amounts of rain water that should be going into stormwater drains instead.

It causes toilets to stop working and sewage ends up coming back out. It can pop a manhole and overflow onto the roads or back up through pipes and gully traps onto people's properties.

Because the system can't cope with the excessive amount of water, we have to release it into the rivers to stop the overflows in people's homes.

What does Council do to prevent a discharge during a rain event?

A heavy rain warning from the MetService is the trigger for us to prepare.

Before heavy rain events, our contractors complete pre-checks and jetting to ensure the system is working as it should.

They will constantly check hotspots, monitor levels at pump stations and manholes, and respond to requests for service to help the system cope with excessive volumes of water.

We will take measures like using waste trucks to shift the wastewater from an overloaded area to an area that is not yet affected, in an effort not to have to open the discharges.

Our strategy is always to prevent opening the emergency valves for as long as possible so we reduce the amount that gets discharged, and also the possibility the rain may stop, and the flows will drop off.

The decision to open the valves to rivers is left until the absolute last minute when there is no other option.

How does rain get in?

During heavy rain, a large portion of the water in the wastewater pipes is rain water which is getting into the system from private residential properties.

The largest cause is flooding on properties where water overflows over the top of gully traps or into broken gully traps.

Illegal downpipe connections draining rain water from the roof into gully traps or directly into their wastewater lateral pipe also contribute significant flows.

It also gets in through the ground into cracked lateral pipes.

In heavy rain, the amount of stormwater that drains from the average roof is equivalent to the wastewater flows from 40 households.

Just 4 houses with downpipes draining into their gully traps is enough to affect the wastewater system for 130 of their neighbours.

Just 2 houses with surface water draining into their gully traps is enough to affect the wastewater system for 130 of their neighbours.

Rainwater could be getting into the wastewater system from somewhere on your property and you may not know it and could be affecting other people in your neighbourhood.

What is Council doing to solve the problem?

Our DrainWise project has been set up specifically to reduce wastewater overflows in residential properties and discharges into rivers.

- Helping homeowners:

The project will focus on solutions for helping homeowners fix stormwater drainage on their property so we can reduce the risk of rainwater getting in.

We're continuing a programme of inspections in the worst affected catchments like Kaiti and Whataupoko. We'll use smoke testing to find where stormwater pipes are connected to the wastewater system or wastewater pipes are not sealed. We can also use a camera to check the condition of pipes under your property.

We still need to know where stormwater is getting in, so we know what our options are for helping homeowners fix it. We also want to make sure rain can drain from your house and off your section to the stormwater network.

You can help us by completing the following survey at www.gdc.govt.nz/drainwise or if you have questions or want to get in touch, please contact us at Drainwise@gdc.govt.nz.

- Council pipes

We're also completing renewals of Council pipes and backup systems and investing \$22m to renew our infrastructure as set out in the Long Term Plan.

We've spent \$8m in renewing infrastructure since 2012. This includes work to replace 100 year-old pipes, upgrading pump stations, sealing off cross connections between the wastewater and stormwater networks and installing emergency storage tanks like the two 45,000 litre tanks in Steele Road.

It isn't as simple as increasing the size of Council's main pipes. Increasing capacity would impact on our treatment plant infrastructure too, which shouldn't have to process what was clean rain water.

Why is it taking so long to fix?

Our network has 440km of wastewater pipes - 50% of these belong to the property owners.

\$22m over ten years will be spent renewing Council's infrastructure but this only accounts for a small portion of the stormwater getting in. [we will need to continue to spend at least \$1m every year forever in order to keep replacing old pipes, it's not just in the current LTP].

There's about 14,750 properties across the city to inspect for drainage issues. It will take time to inspect them all. We have a 10 year programme to work our way around the city.

Most properties in the city have been inspected at some stage. Previously our focus was on getting downpipes out of the gully traps, but this was only part of the problem.

We've also found when inspecting these properties years later the downpipe is back in the gully trap so we'll require it to be plumbed permanently into the stormwater network.

We've found there are multiple routes for water to get into the wastewater system from private property. Inspections now also include investigating gully traps and drainage of stormwater that floods or ponds on people's properties.

Just 2 houses with surface water draining into their gully traps is enough to affect the wastewater system for 130 of their neighbours.

We also need the co-operation of property owners who are responsible for drainage on their property. Some of the problems can be quite costly to fix.

Using survey and inspection results helps us prioritise which areas to investigate first and potentially invest in, but our budgets also limit us to addressing small areas at a time.

What can you do?

Be DrainWise:

Check drains and pipes on your property.

You may need to:

- Redirect your downpipe away from the gully trap.
- Make sure your stormwater is drained into the Council stormwater network.
- Increase the height of your gully trap.
- Seal cracks in gully traps or wastewater pipes.
- For some larger problems you may need to install new lateral pipes and need to get a building permit. Talk to us before you start. We'll help you get the right approvals.
- Employ a qualified plumber or drainlayer.

If you have issues with surface water or your household plumbing when it rains – complete our survey at www.gdc.govt.nz/drainwise.

Conserve water:

During and after a heavy rain event try to reduce household wastewater like limiting toilet flushes, running dishwashers, washing machines or draining bath tubs.

What's the difference?

- STORMWATER DRAINS AND PIPES
Carry rain water that runs off houses, land and roads. Rain water that drains from your property into roadside gutters flows through Council's stormwater network and out

into rivers. It's important not to pollute stormwater or let it drain into the wastewater network.

- WASTEWATER (SEWER) PIPES

Take the water from your household sinks, baths, toilets and laundries. This water drains into gully traps and through a lateral (an underground pipe that is a part of your property) into the Council main wastewater pipe. These pipes take the water to the Wastewater Treatment Plant to be treated.

- WHAT'S A GULLY TRAP?

It's a small open drain located outside your house near the kitchen or bathroom. Gully traps should also have a small grate and a raised surround to prevent water flooding in. Gully traps can be made of PVC (plastic), earthenware or cement.





